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Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 /070 W
----------048631 251401Z /72
R 251230Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9371
INFO AMEMBASSY BRAZZAVILLE
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION USNATO
USIN HAVANA
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 4093

E.$ 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, UR, CF, CU MMOL
SUBJECT: VISIT TO POINTE NOIRE

1. ANGOLA DESK OFFICER VISITED POINTE NOIRE APRIL 17. IN TRAVEL AROUND THE CITY, AS WELL AS 15 KILOMETERS DOWN CABINDA ROAD--TO WITHIN ABOUT 20 KILOMETERS OF CABINDA BORDER--CUBANS, AND MILITARY IN GENERAL, WERE FOUND TO BE MAINTAINING A VERY LOW PROFILE. LOCAL RESIDENTS CLAIMED LARGE NUMBER OF HEAVILY ARMED CUBANS WERE PRESENT IN CABINDA BORDER. HOWEVER, IN AREA VISITED THERE WAS ONLY ONE MILITARY CHECKPOINT--AT ENTRANCE TO PORT, AND MANNED BY A SINGLE CONGOLESE; A TOTAL OF ABOUT A DOZEN CUBANS WERE SEEN DURING THE VISIT, NONE IN UNIFORM. (COMMENT: ALTHOUGH THIS VISIT ADMITTEDLY DID NOT INVOLVE AN EXHAUSTIVE SEARCH OF POSSIBLE LOCATIONS OF CUBANS, NEVERTHELESS IT DOES CALL INTO QUESTION RECENT CLAIMS BY SOME EUROPEAN DIPLOMATS OF CURRENT MAJOR AND OBVIOUS CUBAN BUILDUP IN POINTE NOIRE.)

2. IN VISIT TO POINTE NOIRE PORT, TWO SOVIET SHIPS, THE VERA
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LEBEDEVA AND THE METALLURG ANOSOV, WERE OBSERVED. THE LATTER WAS OFFLOADING TWO TYPES OF VEHICLES. ONE TYPE, ESTIMATED TO NUMBER AT LEAST A DOZEN, RESEMBLED A US. TWO-AND-A-HALF TON TRUCK AND WAS PAINTED ARMY GREEN. NUMBER OF WHEELS/AXLES COULD NOT BE OBSERVED SINCE VEHICLES WERE STILL ON BOARD SHIP. THE BED IN THE REAR OF THE VEHICLE HAD SIDES OF MEDIUM HEIGHT. IN THE BED OF EACH VEHICLE--PRECISELY IN THE MIDDLE, INDICATING A

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MOUNTED RATHER THAN A LOOSE OBJECT--WAS A CANVAS IN A ROUGHLY CYLINDICAL SHAPE, WITHOUT SIGNIFICANT PROTRUSIONS, ABOUT FOUR FEET IN DIAMETER AND EIGHT FEET HIGH ABOVE BED OF VEHICLE.

3. THE OTHER TYPE OF VEHICLE--ESTIMATED TO NUMBER AT LEAST SIX--BEING OFFLOADED RESEMBLED A TANK MINUS THE TURRET, WITHOUT A WEAPON OF ANY KIND, BUT WITH A CYLINDER, ABOUT 12 FEET IN DIAMETER, IN A HORIZONTAL POSITION SEVERAL INCHES ABOVE THE BODY OF THE VEHICLE. THE CYLINDER WAS ATTACHED BY A HINGE TO A VERTICAL SECTION OF CYLINDER WHICH PROTRUDED UPWARD SEVERAL INCHES FROM THE VEHICLE, INDICATING THAT THE ENTIRE CYLINDER COULD BE TURNED TO A VERTICAL POSITION. AIRGRAM FOLLOWS WITH SKETCH.

4. SUBSTANCE OF THIS CABLE WAS DISCUSSED WITH CHARGE BRAZZAVILLE AND DAO KINSHASA, WHO CONCUR.
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